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ABSTRACT

The focal crises simulated in the game are set in a district integrated at the beginning of the Fall term. Each school had an enrollment that was approximately 52 percent white, 22 percent black, 22 percent Mexican American, and the remainder Oriental. During the early weeks of school, the integration plan worked smoothly. After a short time, racial tensions began to develop in the junior and senior high schools. Caused in most instances by what appeared to be trivial matters, school authorities feared these tensions would develop into more serious problems. Abraham Lincoln, a school of 2,200, was typical of the senior high schools in the district. Since the beginning of the semester, one small incident had followed another until serious racial tension existed on the campus. In an effort to "cool off" the campus and help locate the specific sources of trouble, the principal called together a representative group of parents, teachers, administrators, and students for a series of meetings. It is this series of meetings that constitute the roles and stage for the simulation. Participants are assigned roles, including those of black student, teacher, parent, administrator, etc. (Author/JM)

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"INTEGRATION: THE FIRST YEAR"

A Role-Playing Simulation on School Integration

Introduction

When schools integrate, many problems develop as a result of the racial, ethnic, social and economic differences of the student body. In this simulation, we will be concerned with such problems in a high school during the first year of integration. While the school district and the school are imaginary, the situation is becoming more typical each year as districts integrate voluntarily or because of court decisions.

You will be assigned a role to play during the simulation. It should not be the one you are most familiar with. The object of role-playing is to encourage you to learn what it feels like to be in someone else's skin for a few hours. How well you can identify with the point of view of a different person may help you respond more fairly to the actual problem either as a student or an adult.

Think through your game identity and try to decide how you would respond to the problem of racial tension in the integrated school. Do not simply express your personal views but try to react to the situation as you believe would be typical of your new race and role. There would be great diversity of opinion among all the races and roles in this situation. For example, Black students, teachers, parents, and administrators could be in total disagreement with one another on how to settle the problems at the high school. The same could easily be true in each of the other groups. It is not necessary for you to agree with all of the members of your race and role groups. It is only important for you to sincerely try to reflect a viewpoint that you believe is honest.

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The Fall Term

All schools in the district were integrated at the beginning of the fall term by order of the Board of Education. Attendance areas were re-drawn, and a bussing schedule developed so that each school would closely correspond to the racial and ethnic balance of the total school district. Accordingly, when the semester began, each school had an enrollment that was approximately 52.5% White, 22% Black, 22% Mexican-American, and 3.5% Oriental.

During the early weeks of school, the integration plan worked smoothly. After a short time, racial tensions began to develop in the junior and senior high schools. Caused in most instances by what appeared to be trivial matters, school authorities feared the development of more serious problems.

Abraham Lincoln, a school of 2,200, was typical of the senior high schools in the district. Since the beginning of the semester, one small incident had followed another until serious racial tension existed on the campus. In particular, trouble seemed to develop in situations where students were unsupervised. The halls, cafeteria, gymnasium and streets near the school all were considered trouble spots for racial conflict. There were indications of problems developing in classrooms and extra-curricular activities as well. Finally, on a Friday in mid-October, several fights between racial groups broke out on campus during the lunch periods.

In an effort to "cool off" the campus and to help locate the specific sources of trouble, the Principal called together a representative group of parents, teachers, administrators, and students for a series of meetings. If the group proved helpful, the Principal hoped to bring them together at frequent intervals to discuss the problems and progress of integration at Abraham Lincoln High School.

At the first session, the Principal distributed the following schedule of four meetings:

MEETING SCHEDULE

1. General Session

   Principal presiding

   Goal - An open discussion to identify sources of racial tension at Lincoln High School.

2. Special Session

   The large group will meet as racial sub-groups.

   Goals

   a. Discuss progress made in identifying problems in the first general session.

   b. Discuss ways in which the racial group can work to solve the problems of the school.

   c. Discuss strategies to be followed by the members of the sub-group at the next meeting.

3. Special Session

   The large group will meet as role sub-groups (students, parents, teachers, administrators).

   Goals

   a. Discuss ways in which the role group can work to solve the problems of the school.

   b. Select a spokesman who represents the point of view of the majority. Not everyone is expected to agree.

4. General Session

   Meeting of the spokesmen from each role group as the Principal's Council.

   Goals

   a. Develop a plan to "cool off" the campus

   b. Develop a long-range plan to improve understanding and acceptance of racial differences.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Procedures for playing the game in four segments

   a. General Session (time limit - 30 minutes)

      1. Classroom set-up - regular classroom style

      2. Each player has both a race and a role which they will represent. There are many different roles within each racial group. You are not expected to agree with all of the other members of your race or role groups but to develop a role you believe sincerely reflects a real position. Try not to overplay or grotesquely stereotype the race or role you adopt. At the end of the game, you will have a chance to evaluate the game and to discuss the accuracy of the roles that are taken. There should always be a few outspoken militants, but remember that the majority probably would be moderate.

      3. The purpose of the general session is to identify the sources of racial tension at Lincoln High School. The style will be very open and the players should attempt to identify as many potential problems as they think would exist. They should then decide which problems would be most severe and need immediate attention, and which call for more long-range study.

      4. The Game Leader will appoint a chairman for the general session from the administrator's role group and a secretary from the parent's group. The administrator group will be free to select their own Principal when they meet together.

   b. Special Session - Racial Sub-Groups (time limit - 30 minutes)

      1. Classroom set-up - Sub-groups meet together in different parts of the room.

      2. The purpose of the special session is to develop a feeling for the racial group and to discuss the three goals of the sub-group. (See 2, page 3)

   c. Special Session - Role Sub-Groups (time limit - 15 minutes)

      1. Classroom set-up - Sub-groups meet together in different parts of the room.

      2. The purpose of this special session is to develop a feeling for the role being played. This group also selects a spokesman to represent the position of the majority. Groups members with different points of view

will have an opportunity to express themselves during the meeting of the Principal's Council by taking an empty chair, called the "Influence Chair," which will be provided for this purpose. (explanation below)

d. General Session - The Principal's Council (time limit - 60 minutes)

1. Classroom set-up - Organize the room so that there is a circle of five chairs in the center.

2. The spokesmen of the four sub-groups are seated in the circle.

3. The extra chair ("Influence Chair") is for the use of anyone who wishes to clarify a point or to disagree with a position taken in the group. Anyone taking the "Influence Chair" must be recognized to speak by the Principal, and may stay in the chair until someone else wishes to use it. The empty chair should be used early and often so that all dissenting views are expressed.

4. The rest of the group sits together according to role, but may communicate in writing with their spokesmen, and and orally with members of their racial group so long as it does not disrupt the game.

5. At the discretion of the game leader, a time-out for consultation or group caucus can be called at the request of any player.

6. All final decisions are made by the Principal. It is up to him to decide whether to accept or reject the advice of his council. The Principal should refrain from making judgments until after the other spokesmen have had their turns.

7. At any time it appears necessary to stimulate discussion, the game leader can introduce new information which seems appropriate or can use crises taken from the "Crises Sheet."

8. Should a player or group disrupt the action, they can be threatened with arrest by the Principal on the first warning and removed from the game with the second. If removed, they cannot participate in the formal play.

2. Evaluation (minimum time - 15 minutes)

After the conclusion of the game, the game leader should discuss the reactions of the group to what they have done. It is important to discuss attitudes toward the problem of integration as well as reactions to the role-playing situation. It is also very important to discuss stereotyping and the origin of ideas used by players in developing their game identity. In many respects the evaluation session is the most important segment of the game.

Some Impressions On
RACE AND ROLE

It is difficult to accurately generalize about the attitudes toward integration which would be held by the various race and role groups represented in the game. However, since you may have little familiarity with some of these groups, the brief positions suggested below might be helpful.

Attitudes toward integration

The White Community:

There is much disagreement over whether integration is a good idea. The majority already oppose giving up neighborhood schools and are especially strong in opposition to bussing. There are also many Whites who favor integration. Professional educators would tend to favor integration in general, but would have mixed reactions to integration in their own schools.

The Brown Community:

The older members of the Brown community do not generally take strong public positions on public issues and many Mexican-Americans who have been successful in the system would tend to support things as they are. The militant "Chicano" would be divided on integration, but many who are already going to integrated suburban schools are concerned with educational quality and a recognition of the historical and cultural contributions of the Mexican-American in the Southwest. The demand for local control and greater community involvement is strongly supported by "Chicano" groups in the areas of greatest population density, such as East Los Angeles. There is also little desire by most Mexican-Americans to form coalitions with Black groups and even some resentment over the degree to which Black Americans have organized more effectively to make their position known.

The Black Community:

The degree to which the positions of militant groups are publicized tends to overshadow the desires of most Blacks

for integration and an opportunity for greater upward mobility in American society. While most vocal spokesmen for this position are labeled "Uncle Tom" by more militant Blacks, the majority, while deeply enraged by the racism of White America, want the opportunity that is promised by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The militants and moderates who favor local control and community involvement do so out of a sense of frustration and the belief that White America cannot change in the direction of equality.

The Oriental Community:

While there are few Orientals in comparison to the other groups, there is a division between the older generation and the young who are becoming more militant in their demands for recognition and in reaction to the historical mistreatment suffered by their ancestors from the Gold Rush period to the recent past.

Militants:

All of the racial groups have strong militant spokesmen who do not favor compromise or coalition except in their own interest. They do not appear to constitute a majority but gain power when the moderate majority of any group becomes convinced that peaceful and rational approaches to change do not work because of the refusal of those in power to listen or to respond fairly.

"INTEGRATION: THE FIRST YEAR"

GAME LEADER INSTRUCTION SHEET

1. Organize your class into four equal-sized groups, one group is the parents, one the students, one the teachers, and one administrators.

   a. Have each role group count off 1 - 4; then announce that:

      1 - is White
      2 - is White
      3 - is Black) Pick one Black or Brown group member
      4 - is Brown) to be the Oriental parent.

   b. In integrated schools, reverse racial identity, but try to have one member of each racial group play his own race, so that he can serve as a resource person to the others in his group.

      (DO NOT let the role groups select as spokesman someone playing his own role.)

   c. Using four different colored cards, distribute a card to each player which can be used to identify his race role in the game. The cards can be pinned on or held up whenever a player seeks recognition during the play so that his racial role can be easily identified.

2. Pass out copies of the game and ask the group to read pages 1 - 3.

3. Summarize the first three pages. Read and explain the next section of game instructions. Please emphasize the following points:

   a. Try not to over-play the role.

   b. No group should be unanimous for there would be disagreement in all groups.

   c. When the role spokesman is chosen, it should be done by majority vote.

   d. The influence chair is for all dissenters and should be used as much as possible.

e. The evaluation session at the end may be the most important activity of the game.

4. To start the first session, ask the administrators role group to raise their hands, choose as spokesman a person you think can control the general session and give him the instructions for the meeting.

5. Choose a secretary from the parent group in the same manner. Be sure the secretary uses the chalkboard.

6. Carefully time each session.

7. If the discussion gets too far off the subject, or if the roles are too absurd, stop the game, explain what you think is happening and then let it go on.

8. If more specific information is needed at any point, you can use the crisis sheet to provide more issues.

9. Do not allow players to arbitrarily add information not included already in the game or by you.

10. Allow as much time as you can for evaluation.

"INTEGRATION: THE FIRST YEAR"

Game Leader Crisis Sheet

The following problems can be used by the game leader in one of several ways:

1. One or more can be described to provide more substance to the development of tensions at the high school.

2. They can be used to assist race or role groups in their discussion of the kinds of issues which cause racial tensions to develop in integrated schools.

3. They can be introduced as specific problems which must be solved to avoid further outbreaks of violence.

Issues

1. Should a specific number of seats on the student council be reserved for racial groups? Should the student body officers rotate among the campus racial groups?

2. Should Cheer Leaders or Song Leaders be selected so that each race is represented?

3. Should all extra-curricular campus groups and activities (clubs, honor organizations, athletic teams) be required to have balanced racial membership?

4. Should representation on the student council be extended to racial and ethnic groups such as Black Student Union, United Mexican-American Students, and others? What guidelines should be used?

5. Will grade average standards for eligibility to office be unfair to minority groups?

6. School Paper - should a policy be adopted which assures fair coverage to all racial and ethnic groups?

7. Should assemblies be held to commemorate outstanding persons, events, and cultural contributions of racial and ethnic groups (e.g. Black Culture Week; Caesar Chavez's Birthday, etc.)

8. Dances - How can inter-racial dances be held without the danger of clashes between groups?

9. Racial and Ethnic Pride - How can pride be encouraged to promote understanding instead of separateness?

10. Dress and Grooming - Can standards be established which allow students to express pride in racial and ethnic background in both dress and grooming?

11. Faculty - Should efforts be made to comply to the student ratio of racial and ethnic group teachers?

12. Should the cafeteria staff be instructed to serve foods characteristic of racial and ethnic taste?

13. Can students be grouped by ability without causing in-school segregation? Would abolishing such grouping cause lower standards in all classes?

14. Should special courses such as Black and Chicano History and Culture be offered for those groups only; to all students interested; to all students by integrating those subjects into the regular curriculum?

15. Discipline and Grading - How can charges of discrimination in grading and discipline be satisfactorily settled?

Crises

1. A fire bomb is thrown into the Principal's office causing extensive damage.

2. A walk-out is threatened because the football coach is accused of favoring White players.

3. An inflamatory underground newspaper is discovered on campus which is racist anti-Black.

4. Security officers are assigned to patrol the restrooms to stop fights.

5. A parents group calls for a school boycott by White children because of the violence on campus.

6. A Chicano walkout takes place, charging school favoritism to Blacks.

7. A riot breaks out on campus and police must be called to restore order.

8. A teachers' walkout is threatened, charging the administration with a breakdown in discipline.

9. Parents, on campus without permission of the administration, are arrested for "loitering."

10. A series of fights between Mexican-American and Black students cause the school to be temporarily closed.

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